

# BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

## COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM

4.00PM MONDAY 7 JULY 2003

### COUNCIL CHAMBER HOVE TOWN HALL

#### MINUTES

Present: Councillor Mitchell (Chair); Councillors Mrs Cobb, Hawkes, Kemble (OS), Meadows, Meegan, Older, Mrs Simson, Watkins and Wrighton.

Sussex Police: Chief Superintendent Paul Curtiss, Sgt. Peter Castleton, Chief Inspector L Gray.

Sussex Police Authority: Councillor K Bodfish and David Simmons.

Communities of Interest: Robert Cristofoli (Brighton & Hove Mediation Service); Terry Davies (Brighton & Hove Crime Reduction Partnership); Dorothy Engmann, (Age Concern); John Mitchell, (EB4U); Laurie Moss, (East Sussex Fire Brigade); Sharon Otoo, (Racial Harassment Forum); Derek Peacock (St James's Street Action Group); David Standing, (Hove YMCA).

Council Officers: Linda Beanlands, (Community Safety Manager), Kuen-Wah Cheung, (Community Safety Team), Ruth Condon, (Research & Performance Monitoring Officer, Community Safety), Aaron Devereaux, (Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator), Jonathon Fortune, (Neighbourhood Services Manager), Louise Hanrahan, (Legal Services), Nigel Lewis, (Brighton & Hove YOT), Graham Stevens, (Drug and Alcohol Action Team).

In attendance: Councillors Giebler, Tonks and Williams. Colin Bennett, National Federation of the Blind.

#### PART ONE

#### ACTION

#### 1. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

##### 1A Declarations of Substitutes

Substitute Councillor

For Councillor

Meadows  
Older

Framroze  
Willows

Watkins

Elgood

**1B Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

**1C Exclusion of Press and Public**

1.1 The Committee considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any items contained in the agenda, having regard to the nature of the business to be transacted and the nature of the proceedings and the likelihood as to whether, if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of confidential or exempt information as defined in Section 100A(3) or 100 1 of the Local Government Act 1972.

1.2 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public not be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any items.

**2. MINUTES**

2.1 **RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2003 be approved and signed by the Chair.

**3. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

3.1 The following question was submitted by Colin Bennett, Chairman, East Sussex Branch of the National Federation of the Blind.

"Does the Brighton and Hove Division of the Sussex Police Authority and Brighton and Hove Council intend to use the existing legislation to combat the wilful obstruction of so many of our footways?"

The legislation includes the Highways Act 1835, the Town Police Clauses Act 1847, the Highways Act 1980 and the Fixed Penalty Offences Order 1999. The obstruction of Brighton and Hove streets is manifestly the worst in Sussex and arguably the worst in the UK."

3.2 The Chair read a response from the council's Highways Manager.

"As the Highway Authority, Brighton & Hove City Council takes its obligations seriously by operating policies and undertaking various roles to champion the rights and freedoms of all highway users. This includes regular, routine inspections and systems of maintenance, co-ordination of roadworks and activities of others authorised to open the highway (i.e gas, water, electricity etc), licensing of "obstructions" such as skips, scaffolds and tables and chairs on the

footway to ensure the highway is also enjoyed as an amenity and space available to all. New transport projects include facilities for vulnerable users, including sighting impaired such as tactile crossings, audible signals and rotating cones at controlled crossings. We consult groups such as Mr Bennett's in pursuit of these aims as well as receiving numerous enquiries in relation to a number of connected issues.

Brighton & Hove is a very lively and dynamic city that also attracts a large number of visitors by road, rail, bus, bike, and on foot. There is also a number of public events and very large developments underway that require deliveries, coordination and at times closure of footways and roads. We will continue to consult with disabled groups and take account of the needs of disabled people when dealing with highway policy.

We are always happy to hear from and help the vulnerable highway users when we can."

3.3 Sgt Castleton informed the Forum that the police could use the Town Police Clauses Act and the Highways Act to deal with obstructions on the highway.

3.4 Councillor Meadows reported that the problem of A Boards and other obstructions to the highway was discussed at the Equalities and Social Justice Forum. An Action Group was set up to review access to services for deaf, blind and deafblind people and 20 recommendations were agreed. These included recommendations relating to obstructive street furniture and parking on the pavements. The recommendations would be placed before service committees and the Policy and Resources Committee.

3.5 Derek Peacock mentioned that the pavement in St James's Street had been obstructed by fruit and vegetable stalls and café tables and chairs. Ian Denyer, the Highways Licensing Officer had proceeded with a licensing scheme to improve the problem.

3.6 The Chair informed Mr Bennett that he would receive a detailed reply. She mentioned that the Environment Committee would be considering a walking strategy for Brighton & Hove and that disabled people would be consulted.

#### **4. MAKING THE FORUM WORK FOR THE PARTNERS IN THE CDRP**

4.1 Members of the Forum had received a letter from the Chair with the agenda for the meeting. The letter had invited Forum Members to consider the following questions.

- Is the Forum adding value to your work? If not, how can the

Community Safety Forum better meet your needs?

- How can the Forum communicate more effectively?
- What crime and safety issues do you think would benefit from discussion with elected members – and with your crime reduction partners – and what would you like to see on agendas this year?

4.2 Following the discussion, agendas for the year could be planned, terms of reference revised and circulated.

4.3 Derek Peacock, St James's Street Action Group said that there had always been a wealth of talent and expertise in the Forum and it had been a learning experience for him. He had been able to meet people he would not otherwise have met and been able to report the work of the St James's Street Action Group. However, he had not been able to link up with other partners and he stressed the importance of proceeding quickly with the terms of reference.

4.4 The Chair informed Members that the terms of reference would be submitted to the next meeting of the Forum.

**Linda  
Beanlands**

4.5 Terry Davies, Business Crime Prevention Partnership mentioned that partners were beginning to work together. He stressed the importance of sharing information across agencies. There was a need to pool evidence before going to court for anti social behaviour orders. He suggested City News could be used as an avenue for communicating more effectively.

4.6 Councillor Mrs Cobb felt that the way information was presented was a key issue. It needed to be simple and understandable.

4.7 Dorothy Engmann, Age Concern, stressed that the Forum was very formal. She suggested that a less formal meeting would aid better communication. Meanwhile, the work of the Forum should feed into the Local Strategic Partnership.

4.8 Councillor Hawkes suggested that it would be helpful for the forum members to meet more informally. For example members could divide into informal discussion groups for 20 minutes.

4.9 The Community Safety Manager informed the Forum that the capacity of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership would be built on over the next year. She asked members to focus on how they could share information. There would be more opportunities in future for members to share what their organisation had been doing.

## **5. POSITION STATEMENT – DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITY**

**SAFETY TEAM**

5.1 The Forum considered a presentation from the Community Safety Manager (copy of slides attached).

5.2 A key objective was to build the capacity of the Community Safety Team. It was now proposed to move police officers and council officers into a single building with public access.

5.3 Members were given details of council officers and police officers that would work within the team. The new team wanted to deliver a high profile message and would provide direct customer access.

5.4 Members welcomed and supported the initiatives and requested updates. The joint initiative with the police was particularly welcomed and considered an exciting change.

**6. ACQUISITIVE CRIME - PRESENTATION**

6.1 The Forum received a presentation from Sgt. Peter Castleton, showing figures for acquisitive crime (copy of slides attached). There had been a slight increase in recorded burglary dwellings in the period 1998-2003. A 3% reduction target had been set for the police this year.

6.2 Members were given details of dwelling burglary hotspots and burglary trends and the link between acquisitive crime and drugs. There was a link in the increase in burglaries and the rise in drug dealing and there was a longer term need to look at the number of drug related crime.

6.3 Recorded vehicle crime showed a seasonal increase in the summer. Business crime also showed a seasonal trend in August/September.

6.4 Members were given details of Operation Robust in which the police would focus on drugs and acquisitive crime hotspots. This would be in partnership with drug agencies and housing.

6.5 Councillor Mrs Cobb expressed concern at the reduction of arrests after the opening of the centre in Hollingbury. Chief Superintendent Curtiss replied that although there was a reduction in arrests when the centre first opened, this trend had been reversed. Burglary victims should receive a response within four hours.

6.6 Councillor Older asked about the amount of time spent on paperwork. Chief Superintendent Curtiss mentioned that a great deal of police time was spent on paperwork. For example it took six

hours to process a shoplifter if they admitted shoplifting.

6.7 Dorothy Engmann asked for information about artifice crime. She was informed that the Carelink system was in place. This system lent itself to burglar detection. She would receive further information from the police.

6.8 Terry Davies mentioned a policy to deter known shoplifters from entering premises at the door, whilst other members of the scheme were informed by radio. There were now more reported attempts at shoplifting and figures were shared with the police.

6.9 David Standing asked if there was a policy around police intelligence. Sgt Castleton informed the Forum that the police were engaged with people and carefully considered all information received from whatever source.

## **7. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INTENSIVE SUPERVISION AND SURVEILLANCE PROGRAMME (ISSP) IN BRIGHTON & HOVE**

7.1 The Forum considered the report of the Head of Youth Offending Service which outlined progress in establishing a local Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme to target the most prolific and serious young offenders as a community based alternative to custody (see minute book).

7.2 ISSP was currently delivered by 50 schemes covering 119 YOTs across the country and has been implemented in phases since July 2001. As part of the final phase 4, implementation must take place in Brighton and Hove by October 2003. The scheme would target 5-10 young people a year.

7.3 Councillor Meadows asked how the scheme would work with Anti Social Behaviour Orders. It was explained that ISSP targeted the most serious young offenders. The scheme might be used in conjunction with Anti Social Behaviour Orders.

7.4 Councillor Simson stressed the importance of closely monitoring the young people and Councillor Hawkes asked if there was a gender dimension. Sharon Otoo of the Racial Harassment Forum asked how the programme would be geared to minority ethnic young people. The Head of Youth Offending Services explained that there was a minimum of 25 hours of supervision input per week. There was an emphasis on supporting people at weekends when they were most at risk. Nationally, male offenders made up 80% of those taking part in the scheme. All programmes would be individually considered. Offending for minority ethnic young people locally was no greater than the general population. Appropriate programmes would be prepared for minority ethnic young people.

7.5 David Standing made the point that the budget for the programme would not be large. The Head of Youth Offending Services agreed that there was not a large sum of money available but the YOT would use a range of options through schools, Connexions, and other links and would welcome the support of other agencies.

7.6 **RESOLVED** - That the report be noted.

## **8. DESIGNATED PUBLIC PLACES ORDER TO BAN STREET DRINKING THROUGHOUT THE CITY AND DEAL WITH ALCOHOL RELATED ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

8.1 The Forum considered a report of the Acting Director, Environment which gave details of the proposals to ban street drinking throughout the City and to introduce a ban from the end of July 2003 (for copy see Minute Book). The Order would give police powers to require the surrender of alcohol and make an arrest if the drinker refused to do so after being asked. The Order did not intend to prohibit residents and visitors, drinking responsibly in places such as the beach. The Forum was informed that their comments would be incorporated as part of the consultation process. A further report would be submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee on 24 July 2003. The order would formally and legally commence from 4 August 2003.

8.2 The Community Safety Manager stressed the need to successfully implement the order. The work to be undertaken to support a City-wide drinking ban was set out in paragraph 6 of the report. The enforcement strategy would be circulated to members as soon as it was available and there would be a holistic approach towards the 40-50 street drinkers in the city.

8.3 Members generally supported and welcomed the recommendations and objectives in the report and felt that joint patrols of the police and outreach team was the way forward. Some concern was expressed about displacement and the ability of the police to enforce the ban throughout the city when there was still a problem of enforcement in St James Street.

8.4 The Chair reported that the police were hoping to have support officers and were seeking funding for park keepers. It was also hoped that traffic wardens could report problems to the police.

8.5 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted and welcomed.

## **9. COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM TRENDS AND PERFORMANCE: UPDATE APRIL 2003**

9.1 The Forum considered the report of the Research & Performance Monitoring Officer which described progress on performance measures related to areas of work contained in the Brighton & Hove Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy 2002-2005. Monthly trend data and comparisons with the same period in the previous year were presented (see minute book).

9.2 Chief Inspector Gray drew attention to the figures for criminal damage, which represented 20% of total crime. This had an exaggerated effect on neighbourhood's perception of public safety. He mentioned Operation Athlete, which was aimed at low grade criminal damage.

9.3 Forum members welcomed the improved figures for domestic violence cases. The Police stressed that this target had been relentlessly pursued. The importance of neighbourhood forum meetings was stressed and the Chair suggested an interactive session at the end of a future forum meeting to discuss community initiatives.

9.4 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

## **10. REPORTS OF THE SUSSEX POLICE AUTHORITY MEETINGS HELD ON 17 APRIL AND 5 JUNE 2003**

10.1 The Forum had before them reports of the Sussex Police Authority meetings held on 17 April and 5 June 2003 (see minute book).

### **17 April 2003 meeting**

10.2 Councillor Bodfish reported that there had been a problem with many experienced officers from Sussex being recruited to the Metropolitan Police. This led to problems of officers not always receiving adequate training, before they started their beat duties. The Chief Constable was taking up this matter with the Metropolitan Police.

10.3 Councillor Bodfish was pleased to report that 22 Community Support Officers had started work with Sussex Police at the beginning of March 2003. Meanwhile, Sussex Police had successfully established CCTV schemes that were supported by the public and businesses.

10.4 A national firearms strategy was held between 31 March and 30 April. Nearly 800 guns had been handed over in Sussex. The Chief Constable was treating the problem of firearms as a matter of the highest priority.

**5 June 2003 meeting**

10.5 Members of the Sussex Police Authority were appointed at this meeting. The authority consisted of members from Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council. There were also independent and magistrate members. Councillor Mark Dunn from West Sussex County Council would be the Chair of the Sussex Police Authority for the next two year. Councillor Peter Jones, from East Sussex County Council would be the Vice Chair.

10.6 Councillor Dee Simson was pleased to see the appointment of Community Support Officers. She asked if these officers would be moved around Brighton & Hove and the difference between their role and the police.

10.7 Chief Superintendent Curtiss replied that there would be 10 Community Support Officers in Brighton & Hove. They were a resource to be used on particular problems. They had citizen powers of arrest and additional powers to deal with traffic matters. They would spend almost all their time out on the street and would not have to spend time in the office doing paperwork. The use of the Community Support Officers had been enormously successful.

10.8 **RESOLVED** – That the reports of the Sussex Police Authority meetings held on 17 April and 5 June 2003 be noted.

The meeting concluded at 6.23 p.m

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2003